



FEBRUARY IS AMERICAN HEART MONTH!

February, the month of valentines and flowers, is also American Heart Month. It's a good reminder that it is important to monitor the heart health of yourself and your family.

Although advances in medical research have significantly improved our ability to fight heart disease by providing new treatments and greater knowledge about its causes, heart disease continues to be America's number one killer. Cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke, kills more Americans than the next five leading causes of death **combined**.

During American Heart Month you can help stop this "equal opportunity" killer of women, men and children by familiarizing yourself with risk factors, various warning signs, and lifesaving emergency response techniques.

Your regional hospitals and county health departments as well as your local chapters of the American Heart and American Medical Associations can be valuable resources.



WARNING SIGNS

Both heart attacks and strokes stem from coronary heart disease. Stroke is the number three killer of Americans and a leading cause of serious disability. Consequently, it is very important to reduce risk factors, know the warning signs, and know how to respond quickly and properly at the onset of symptoms.

Heart attack signs include chest pain, shortness of breath, and discomfort. Stroke symptoms include sudden pain or dizziness, especially on one side of the body, loss of eyesight, and severe headaches.

For more information on how to detect a heart attack or stroke, see [Heart Attack, Stroke & Cardiac Arrest Warning Signs](#).



LEARN CPR

Up to 95 percent of sudden cardiac arrest victims die because CPR and defibrillation arrive too late.

Research has shown that early cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and rapid defibrillation, combined with early advanced care, can produce long-term survival rates of 40 percent where a cardiac arrest or heart attack has been witnessed by a bystander.

Learning CPR is easy and only takes an afternoon. **To find CPR classes and events in your local community, visit the American Heart Association's [website](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control](#). You can also find out where to take CPR classes near you on the American Red Cross of Central Maryland's [website](#).**



WOMEN & HEART DISEASE

(Women's Heart Day was February 4th.)

Heart health is especially important for women. In polls, cancer is identified by more than half as both the greatest health problem facing women and the leading cause of death. However, in truth, heart disease kills more women than all forms of cancer combined. Nearly one out of two women will eventually die from heart disease or stroke, compared to one in 30 who will die of breast cancer. More than 500,000 women will die of heart disease this year.

Incorporating simple steps into their life, such as a healthy diet and regular exercise, can help women reduce their risk for heart disease and stroke. You can also join the AHA's "[Go Red For Women](#)" campaign, which provides education and tips about the positive steps women can take to reduce their risk of heart disease and stroke.

For more information about women and heart disease, please visit the [Women and Cardiovascular Disease](#) page on the American Heart Association's web site.